

VIEWPOINTS

by

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INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT -- MORNING

PAUL is sitting down at his computer desk. He answers his cellphone.

PAUL

Hey. *(pause)* You're where? Outside?

EXT. PAUL'S BALCONY -- MORNING

PAUL gets up from his chair and makes his way over to the door leading to his balcony. Once outside, he looks downward at the ground below. We see JEREMY (with cellphone) and DAN below. They are looking upward at PAUL.

PAUL

Hey.

JEREMY

Hey.

PAUL

Who's that with you?

JEREMY

How about just let us up and it can be a pleasant surprise...

PAUL

...OK.

PAUL walks out of frame and back into his apartment.

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT -- MORNING

There's a knock at PAUL'S door. He answers it. JEREMY and DAN are standing there, both looking rather displeased.

PAUL

Hey Jeremy... *(recognizing DAN now)* oh hey, Dan.

PAUL extends his hand for shaking; both JEREMY and DAN ignore it. They walk past PAUL and into his apartment. They sit down on PAUL'S futon. PAUL walks back.

JEREMY

So... why'd you steal it, Paul? 'Cause of the accident?

INT. WINDOWED ROOM -- EVENING

Flashback. The camera is handheld; not totally stable. Through the room's wide window we see PAUL seated in another room. He is viewing a film that's being projected onto a screen in front of him. A mask with a long tube is attached to his face... the tube appears to be connected to a canister behind the screen. The camera turns away from the window to reveal JEREMY and SHARON, a reporter.

JEREMY

OK so I've designed this experiment in such a way that it cannot be activated without this card of mine. There are no other copies, so I'm the only one who can do this. Once I insert the card here, *(pointing toward tiny slot on wall)* the aroma will travel from the canister, through the tubing, and into Paul's nostrils.

SHARON

But... there have already been reports on the side-effects of this experiment, haven't there?

The OPERATOR pans his camera over to reveal JEREMY.

JEREMY

Before we get into that, though, let me say: viewers just aren't interacting enough with films; they're too *passive*. So for me, the ideal cinema of the future will embrace *all five* of our senses... *(camera pans back to window)* Here's one step in that direction.

INT. PROJECTION ROOM -- EVENING

With PAUL now, we see a number of closer shots of the equipment as well as what he's watching on screen as JEREMY continues on...

JEREMY (O.S.)

As you can see, Paul is currently viewing footage of flowers in a conservatory. Through that tubing, we've found a way to also incorporate the unique smell of this conservatory into his viewing experience. So once I insert this card here, Paul will be smelling pleasant, flowery scents...

INT. WINDOWED ROOM -- EVENING

SHARON

But, Jeremy... you're aware that people who've previously been subjected to this experiment have reported memory problems? Not just simple forgetting, but some very odd things happening with their memory.

JEREMY pushes a button on the PA panel next to him. He talks into the speaker...

JEREMY

Ready, Paul?

We see PAUL give a thumbs-up signal. JEREMY then inserts his activation card into the slot. A few moments pass as everyone watches...

JEREMY

Memory problems? Well... a few people maybe but it's always temporary.

SHARON (O.S.)

He's not moving at all.

JEREMY (O.S.)

That's perfectly normal.

We see PAUL'S arm drop down from his chair's armrest.

SHARON (O.S.)

His arm just dropped..

After a few more seconds, JEREMY activates the PA again.

JEREMY

Paul, give me a thumbs-up please if it's working for you.

No response from PAUL. JEREMY rushes out from the windowed room...

INT. PROJECTION ROOM -- EVENING

JEREMY, SHARON, and the CAMERA OPERATOR rush in. JEREMY pulls the mask off of PAUL'S face. PAUL is clearly unconscious and has developed froth at the mouth.

JEREMY

(shouting to SHARON) OK, go call an ambulance!
(turning to the CAMERA OPERATOR) ..Well, certainly as with all great inventions there are going to be a few kinks in the initial stages.

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT -- MORNING

JEREMY

You sure do know how to hold a grudge. *(pause)*
You took it out of spite, didn't you? *(pause)* I thought I explained to you... that was an *accident*.

And I apologized. *(pause)* I need my wallet back, Paul. I had the activation card in it. I can't continue working on the experiment without it.

DAN

I know we're friends, Paul, and that's why I hesitated about ratting on you...

PAUL

Look... I'll be honest, Jeremy. I think it'd be wrong to continue on with that experiment. It's just too dangerous. But I never took your wallet.

DAN

C'mon, Paul. Last Saturday. Around 3pm. I saw you.

INT. FILM SCHOOL HALLWAY -- AFTERNOON

Flashback. We see DAN walking up a set of stairs. Nearby, PAUL is coming out of an editing suite. He locks the door, then turns around and notices a wallet on the floor. Just as DAN gets to the top, he notices PAUL picking up the wallet, looking through it, then walking off with it.

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT -- MORNING

JEREMY

Makes sense 'cause I remember walking by that suite just about fifteen minutes earlier.

INT. FILM SCHOOL HALLWAY -- AFTERNOON

Flashback. We see JEREMY walking by the same area, searching through his pockets. A wallet slips out from his left pants pocket.

JEREMY (V.O.)

I was searching through my pockets, trying to find my cellphone. I thought I had lost it. My wallet must've slipped out in the process.

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT -- MORNING

PAUL

No, no, no... last Saturday, right? Yeah I remember that afternoon.

INT. INSIDE EDITING SUITE -- AFTERNOON

Flashback. We see PAUL editing footage on a computer. PAUL stands up from the computer and exits the suite. We see him in the hallway now... he locks the door, then turns around.

But rather than a wallet on the floor now, it's a colorful flyer for a band named "The Petals". PAUL picks it up, examines it for a while, then walks off with it.

PAUL (V.O.)

Yeah I remember leaving the suite around 3pm to take a break from it. I noticed something on the ground but it wasn't a wallet I saw, it was a small, really colorful flyer for a band... uh, called... "The Petals", I remember. Had a flower design on it. Anyway, the flyer kinda looked interesting to me, so I kept it.

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT -- MORNING

PAUL

That's what I remember. No wallet involved.

DAN

Paul... I know that's from a movie, OK?

INT. SCREENING ROOM -- EVENING

Flashback. In the darkened room, ALEXANDER THE DIRECTOR is leaning up against the wall as his movie plays. Next, we see a bunch of film students sitting down and watching it. There are some close-ups of a few of the students, including DAN. Also, we notice that each student has on his desk a business card about ALEXANDER'S production company. Also, we see some of the movie that's being screened. In the movie, a character notices a colorful flyer for a band named "The Petals" on the ground.

DAN (V.O.)

Way back in first year... the first week of first year, it must've been... we watched this short movie by this director who came in... I forget his name now... he gave us these business cards, telling us about his production company and stuff... Alexander something, I think. Anyway, in the movie I remember at one point a character picks up this flyer, exactly the sort of flyer you just described. You must've been there, Paul.

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT -- MORNING

PAUL

No, no, I can't remember that at all. I definitely wasn't there.

DAN

So it's just an amazing coincidence, then.

PAUL

Yeah, must be. I've never seen that movie... I'd remember that.

DAN

Would you?

JEREMY

OK enough of this... you know what you saw Dan; let's just search the place.

DAN and JEREMY stand up and start searching through the apartment. They start opening drawers and going through boxes...

PAUL

Go right ahead... the only wallet you'll find here is my own.

DAN opens the middle drawer of PAUL'S dresser... it's cluttered... he goes through it, and in the back he finds JEREMY'S wallet. He holds it up. JEREMY rushes over and grabs it... he looks through it...

JEREMY

(holding up the activation card) Got it.

PAUL

What!? No, no, bullshit, you're framing me.

JEREMY

It was *right there* in your drawer, Paul!

PAUL

Look, I... *honestly*... do not remember that... I... I dunno how that got there. Really.

DAN and JEREMY just glare at PAUL for a while. DAN starts shaking his head...

DAN

You're pathetic, Paul...

JEREMY

Alright forget it; we got the card, let's just go.

DAN and JEREMY start walking toward the door. PAUL is pensively staring downward now, then suddenly:

PAUL

No no wait! I can prove what I told you is true!

DAN

(a sigh) Paul, we know it obviously isn't-

PAUL

(searching frantically through his dresser's bottom drawer now) Just, just lemme find this... I used to keep all my random papers and flyers together in this one folder... I must've put it in there. (PAUL finds the folder) Here it is! ...I should still have that flyer...

PAUL starts going through everything in the packed folder... many random papers and flyers. He tosses aside a business card holder/sleeve that was also in the folder. Realizing that the flyer isn't in there, Paul lets out a sigh of frustration. Simultaneously, he notices something of interest in the business card sleeve that he had tossed aside. Paul picks up the sleeve, and slowly takes out a specific card from it: the business card on ALEXANDER THE DIRECTOR'S production company that was handed out on the day of that screening. A shot of PAUL'S face as he sees this card reveals genuine surprise.

INT. SCREENING ROOM -- EVENING

Flashback. We're back at ALEXANDER'S screening. On the screen, we see once again a character picking up a colorful flyer for a band named "The Petals" off of the ground. We see more shots of the students who are watching this movie - including DAN - but this time we go into a corner of the room, where we see PAUL watching the movie.

PAUL (V.O.)

So, I guess I was lying... unintentionally. Somehow, I had forgotten that I saw this movie... but an image from it still stuck with me... so much that it actually replaced one of my real memories. Maybe this happened only because of the experiment's side effects, but I can't be sure. Maybe it could happen to any viewer... of anything.

On "anything," we see PAUL'S eyes shift to the camera and look directly into the lens.

THE END